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## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

June 13, 2019

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### New State Budget Proposal Helps Ease Tuition Increases; However, Significant Increases to Take Effect at OIT, SOU, and UO

*Salem, OR*— Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) determined today at a public meeting at the Oregon capitol that the undergraduate in-state tuition and fee increases proposed by the governing boards of Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT), Southern Oregon University (SOU), and University of Oregon (UO) will be allowed to take effect.

The tuition increases were based on the \$837 million state investment in public universities advanced this week by the Oregon Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Education. Because this state funding level is higher than in prior legislative proposals, the approved tuition rates are lower than what universities had originally submitted for HECC consideration. With the Commission's actions today, undergraduate in-state tuition and fees will increase 5.7 percent for OIT, 9.9 percent for SOU, and 7.1 percent for UO for the 2019-20 academic year. The proposal for an increase above five percent for 2019-20 for Portland State University (PSU) was [withdrawn from HECC consideration at the request of PSU's President](#). Prior to the recent developments in the state budget for higher education, the HECC expected to consider proposed increases ranging from 9.0 to 13.5 percent.

The Boards of Trustees for Oregon's seven public universities generally set tuition for their students, but under Oregon law HECC is required to determine whether any public university proposal for undergraduate in-state tuition and fee increases greater than five percent is appropriate. In their votes on the three university proposals today, the Commission concluded that the universities met three key criteria for an appropriate increase, based on 1) fostering an inclusive and transparent tuition-setting process, 2) safeguarding access and support for underrepresented students, and 3) the existence of financial conditions necessitating the tuition increase. All three universities will also implement budget cuts in order to fund their operations, and portions of their tuition increases will be directed to increased targeted financial aid to reduce the impact of these increases.

Ben Cannon, executive director of the HECC, said, "While this is still unwelcome news for thousands of students, we are grateful that the Legislature's recent investment decisions have allowed for these increases to be less severe than expected. Further, Oregon students can trust in the public process that informed the Commission's decision today. Using the clear, transparent criteria it established last winter, the HECC concluded that campus tuition setting processes were fair and inclusive, that our state's most underserved and high-need students will be significantly protected from the increases, and that these increases were borne from financial necessity."

Tuition levels at Oregon public universities are directly impacted by state funding, and compounded by increased costs. In addition to the tuition increases, universities are planning for budget cuts of 2-3% and/or use of fund reserves of 0-12% to meet increased operational and personnel expenses. While

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national average for per-student funding, ranking 38th among the states.

Neil Bryant, chair of the HECC, said, "We are grateful for the student-centered commitment of state leaders, for the advocacy of our partners, and for all students, faculty, and administrators who provided testimony today and in recent meetings. While this was an extremely difficult decision for our Commission, the Legislature's recent actions prevented even larger, double digit increase requests. We urge our partners to continue to work with us in solidarity as a higher education community in coming months and years to ensure our campus financing is sustainable, so that all Oregonians have access to quality, affordable postsecondary opportunities."

Today's vote followed testimony from students, stakeholders, and institutional leaders, over the course of today's and previous public meetings. In addition, HECC Commissioners or staff have attended more than 30 meetings and student forums at the seven public universities since January 2019 to observe as much of the tuition-setting processes at the institution level as possible. The passage of House Bill 4141 in 2018 prescribed a more robust tuition-setting process for each public university, with a focus on increasing the engagement of students and other stakeholders. More information is in the public documents below.

- [Public University Tuition Increases Presentation](#)
- [Tuition Setting Process Summary](#)
- [Staff Analysis and Recommendations](#)
- [Summary of Financial Data OIT, SOU, UO](#)
- [OIT final recommendation report with tuition approval request](#)
- [SOU final recommendation report with tuition approval request](#)
- [UO final recommendation report with tuition approval request](#)
- [Letter from PSU President to the HECC](#)

The governing boards of the other four public universities—Eastern Oregon University, Oregon State University, Portland State University, and Western Oregon University—are planning 2019-20 tuition and fee increases below five percent, and therefore do not require HECC approval. Portland State University (PSU) had originally proposed an increase greater than five percent, but withdrew its request late on June 12 following a decision advanced by a Board of Trustees subcommittee to revise PSU's 2019-20 tuition rate below the five percent increase threshold.

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*The State of Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future in which all Oregonians—and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized—benefit from the transformational power of high-quality postsecondary education and training. For more information, go to [www.Oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.Oregon.gov/HigherEd)*



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